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(54) Title: PROCESS FOR SELECTION OF PROTEINACEOUS SUBSTANCES WHICH MIMIC GROWTH-INDU-CING MOLECULES

(57) Abstract

A method of selecting proteinaceous substances produced by recombinant DNA technique which mimic an arbitrary growth-inducing molecule is disclosed. Also disclosed is a method of selecting cells which produce proteinaceous substances which mimic an arbitrary growth-inducing molecule. A process for selecting synthetic genes which codes for a proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule is also provided. The proteinaceous substances produced by this method are believed to be useful as novel drugs, vaccines, diagnostic agents or similar purposes.

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Process For Selection Of Proteinaceous Substances Which Mimic Growth-Inducing Molecules

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Field of the Invention

This invention is directed to methods of producing novel biologically active proteinaceous substances which can be used as drugs, vaccines, diagnostic agents or similar treatments. The invention is more particularly directed to methods of selecting novel biologically active proteinaceous substances produced by recombinant DNA technique which mimic growth-inducing molecules of interest.

Background of the Invention

Contemporary recombinant DNA techniques give scientists the capacity to generate large numbers of novel DNA sequences, RNA sequences, peptides, polypeptides and Some of these novel molecules, by mimicing their natural counterparts, have practical, biologically active properties and can be used as the basis for novel drugs, novel vaccines, possible tailored treatments for autoimmune diseases and new diagnostic reagents as well as other uses. Although large numbers of novel DNA sequences, RNA sequences, peptides, polypeptides and proteins such as those generated by Ballivet and Kauffman, U.S. application 942,630 filed 6/17/85, which is specifically incorporated herein by reference, can be produced, not all novel molecules produced by recombinant DNA technique are biologically active. Consequently, there exists a need for processes for quickly and easily screening those cells which produce biologically active molecules.

Some types of tumors have been found to proliferate by means of an autocrine mechanism or growth stimulating feedback loop. With this mechanism, a cell which has a receptor for a growth-inducing molecule will be 5 stimulated to grow and divide by producing and secreting that same growth-inducing molecule which then binds to the receptor on or in the same cell. For example, some neoplastic transformation of cells by oncogenes and carcinogens is believed to result in the production of 10 growth factors. Some of these growth factors are able to bind to the receptors on the cell that secretes them, and to induce behavior indicative of a transformed phenotype which grows and divides uncontrollably. These findings have demonstrated an autocrine mechanism of transformation 15 whereby production and secretion of growth factors by the cell which then bind to its own receptors by that factor leads to uncontrolled stimulation of the cell's own growth.

Stern et al. (Science 235: 321-324, 1987)
constructed in a vector a novel oncogene which expressed
human epidermal growth factor (EGF). This expression
vector was transformed into a population of cells which had
EGF receptors on their surfaces. The translation product
of this novel oncogene was secreted from each transformed
cell and induced focus formation by binding to the cell's
own EGF receptor. Thus focus formation is the consequence
of autocrine loop closure and chronic autocrine
stimulation.

In view of the foregoing, it is desired to provide rapid, easy methods for selecting proteinaceous substances which mimic growth-inducing molecules, methods for selecting cells which produce proteinaceous substances which mimic growth-inducing molecules and methods for selecting synthetic genes which code for proteinaceous substances which mimic growth-inducing molecules.

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Summary of the Invention

This invention is directed to methods for selecting proteinaceous substances which mimic growthinducing molecules. The proteinaceous substances can be 5 peptides, polypeptides or proteins. The choice of growthinducing molecule is arbitrary, since the method of the invention is not restricted to any particular type of growth-inducing molecule. Specific examples include epidermal growth factor (EGF), dexamethasone and antigens. 10 Cells which require a growth-inducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division and which have been transformed by recombinant DNA technique to secrete proteinaceous substances not normally secreted by the cells are supplied with a growth medium deficient in the growth-inducing 15 molecule and the cells are then grown in the medium. The subset of cells which grow and divide are then collected and the proteinaceous substance produced by the subset of cells is then isolated. In preferred embodiments of the invention the proteinaceous substances are the translation 20 products of the synthetic genes in the expression vector.

Novel peptides, polypeptides or proteins which mimic the growth-inducing molecule will bind to the receptor for the molecule, thus closing the autocrine loop and stimulating cell growth and division. This process 25 allows the rapid and easy detection of cells which secrete a peptide, polypeptide or protein with the desired growthinducing property. Rapid, easy detection is essential when dealing with large numbers of molecules which potentially have growth-inducing activity.

The invention is also directed to methods of selecting cells which produce a proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule. Cells which require a growth-inducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division and which cells have been transformed by 35 recombinant DNA technique to produce proteinaceous substances not normally produced by the cells are supplied with a growth medium deficient in the growth-inducing molecule. The cells are then grown in the medium and the

subset of cells which grow and divide are then isolated. In preferred embodiments of the invention the proteinaceous substances are the translation products of the synthetic genes in the expression vector.

5 The invention further relates to processes for selecting synthetic genes which code for a proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule. Expression vectors which contain synthetic genes which code for a proteinaceous substance are used to transform cells 10 which require a growth-inducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division thereby causing the cells to produce a proteinaceous substance which is the translation product of the synthetic genes in the expression vector. transformed cells are grown in a growth medium deficient in 15 the growth-inducing molecule. The subset of cells which grow and divide are then isolated. The subset of cells containing an expression vector comprising synthetic genes which mimic the growth-inducing molecule of interest are generally the only cells which grow and divide and can be 20 easily harvested.

Detailed Description of the Invention

The term synthetic genes refers to DNA sequences which are the result of manipulation by laboratory techniques. The term natural gene refers to DNA sequences as they are found in situ in a chromosome. Synthetic genes include stochastic (random) or partially stochastic DNA sequences as well as DNA sequences which are composed of parts of a natural DNA sequence and stochastic DNA sequences or particular nucleotides. The term synthetic gene also includes DNA sequences composed of a plurality of DNA sequences derived from natural genes.

The term recombinant DNA technique refers to the techniques of producing synthetic genes, inserting the DNA sequences into expression vectors, and transforming cells with expression vectors. Illustrations of the recombinant DNA technique used in the invention are set forth in detail below in the section entitled Recombinant DNA Technique

which has two subsections, A.Production of Synthetic Genes and B. Transformation of Cells.

Recombinant DNA Technique

Although a large number of methodologies may be employed in the practice of the invention, the following are illustrative of certain, preferred embodiments.

A. Production of Synthetic Genes

Commercially available, prepared restriction enzyme linkers which can be ligated in random order and 10 generate codons for all twenty amino acids without generating stop codons in any reading frame or in either orientation (e.g. octameric linkers purchased from New England Biolabs) are used in the invention. Examples of linkers suitable for use in the invention include ClaI, 15 NdeI, HindIII, SalI, PstI and EcoRI. Equimolar or other mixtures of the linkers are ligated together using T4-DNA ligase (Boehringer and Mannheim Biochemicals) using the procedure of Maniatis et al., Molecular Cloning, A Laboratory Manual, (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 1982), 20 which is specifically incorporated herein by reference. After ligation is complete, the ligated linkers are partially digested with one or several of the restriction enzymes for any of the linkers used to make the sequences such as EcoRI enzyme (Boehringer and Mannheim Biochemicals) 25 according to the manufacturer's instructions. The digested mixture is then separated on a gel such as a 0.7% agarose gel using a standard borate buffer system according to the method of Maniatis (see reference above). The fragments of desired size range(s) of DNA sequences are cut from the gel 30 and isolated according to the method of Maniatis et al., (see above reference). The isolated fragments are then cloned into a restriction enzyme cleavage site or sites of an expression vector that causes secretion from the cell of the peptide or protein which is the translation product of 35 the synthetic genes which have been cloned into the expression vector.

For example, the expression vector pUCDS3 constructed according to the method in Stern et al.,

Science 235: 231-235, (1987) which is specifically incorporated herein by reference, can be used in the invention. This expression vector is constructed by modifying pFB1 which consists of a partial Sau 3A fragment 5 containing the Moloney murine leukemia virus long terminal repeat (LTR) cloned into the Bam HI site of pUC13. expression vector was constructed by J. Morgenstern and H. Land of the Whitehead Institute. The single Eco R1 site of pUC1 was destroyed by cleaving with EcoR1, filling in, and 10 religating to produce pFB1 RI. The Nde I-Pst I fragment of immunoglobulin heavy chain complementary DNA clone 17.2.25 of Loh et al., Cell 33: 85, (1983), which is specifically incorporated herein by reference, which contains sequences endcoding the signal peptide, was modified by oligonucleotide-directed mutagenesis according to the method of Dalbadie-McFarland, et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 79: 6409, (1982) which is specifically incorporated herein by reference, to create an Eco R1 site.

- The fragment excised by cleavage at the Ava II site 20 upstream from the coding sequences and at the newly created
- Eco R1 site was joined to pFB RI cleaved with Sal I and Hind III by using Ava II-pseudo-Sal I and Eco R1-Hind III adapters to yield pUCDS2. A chemically synthesized gene encoding human EGF, prepared according to the method of
- 25 Hare et al., J. Cell Biochem. Suppl. 8A: 87, (1984), which is specifically incorporated herein, was provided with an Eco R1 site and upstream sequences encoding the first three amino acids of immunoglobulin 17.2.25 and subcloned into The Hpa I-Bam HI fragment containing the SV40
- 30 polyadenylation site was provided with synthetic Hpa I-Sal I and Bam HI-Hind III adapters and cloned into pucs adjacent to the EGF gene. The Eco R1-Hine III fragment containing the EGF gene and polyadenylation site was then cloned into pUCDS2 to produce pUCDS3. The expression vector
- 35 is modified by removing the fragment containing the epidermal growth factor (EGF) gene using restriction enzymes Sall and EcoRl. The expression vector is then purified by methods known in the art.

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The ligated linkers are partially digested using Sall and EcoRl restriction enzymes and the fragments are purified and isolated as described above. The fragments are then ligated into the purified expression vector using 5 T4-DNA ligase. Other expression vectors which cause the cell to secrete from the cell the peptide or protein coded by the synthetic gene are also useful in the invention. A signal peptide can be cloned into expression vectors without a signal peptide in a position adjacent to the 10 synthetic genes coding for the peptides or proteins to cause the cell to secrete the peptides or proteins using methods known in the art. Signal peptides such as a mouse immunoglobulin heavy-chain signal peptide or the random sequences of Kaiser et al., Science 235: 312-317, (1987) 15 may be used in the invention.

The ligated linkers should be partially digested with the same restriction enzymes used in the expression vector to create the site for the synthetic genes so that the ends of the ligated linkers will fit the restriction enzyme sites. However, if the ligated linkers have not been partially digested in this way, the ends of the fragments can be modified using other cloning procedures known in the art for these and other synthetic genes such as blunt end ligation.

The library of synthetic genes cloned into the expression vectors is then inserted into cells which lack a growth-inducing molecule.

B. Transformation of Cells

Cells can be transfected by methods such as the

calcium phosphate coprecipitation method of Wigler et al.,

Cell 11: 223-232 (1977); the polyethylene glycol 6000

calcium phosphate treatment method of Sutherland and

Bennett, Cancer Research 44(7): 2769-2772, (1984), or

Sutherland et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 82(2): 2399
2403, (1985); or the electroporation method of Toneguzzo et

al., Mol. Cell Biol. 6(2): 703-706, (1986) or Potter et

al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci 81: 7161-7165, (1984), all of

which are specifically incorporated herein by reference.

Cell Culture

Cells which need a growth-inducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division are suitable for use in the invention. Human diploid fibroblast cells such as WI-38, a cell line which requires the addition of exogenous growth factors to stimulate cell growth and division or B lymphocytes are exemplary for use in this invention. These cells are transformed with expression vector which includes synthetic genes as provided above. In the case of WI-38, the cells are then grown according to the method of Phillips and Cristofalo, Experimental Cell Research 134: 297-302, (1981), except that the medium does not include the growth-inducing molecule which is being sought.

Cells which grow and divide in this medium are
then presumed to be synthesizing a proteinaceous substance
which mimics the growth-inducing molecule not included in
the medium. This proteinaceous substance is the
translation product of the synthetic genes which were
inserted into the cell via the expression vector. These
cells are isolated and the proteinaceous substance
characterized using methods for identifying peptides,
polypeptides and proteins known in the art. Methods used
to identify the proteinaceous substance will vary according
to the type of proteinaceous substance.

25 It is within the scope of the invention to select proteinaceous substances which mimic arbitrary antigens, i.e. the selection method can be used to search for proteinaceous mimics of any antigen of interest. In this case, synthetic genes inserted into an expression vector, 30 such as the system described above, are inserted into B lymphocytes, or other immune system cells, with antibody receptor molecules on their surface against the same external antigenic determinant. If a proteinaceous substance produced by a B lymphocyte which is the 35 translation product of the synthetic genes mimics the antigen, this proteinaceous substance will bind to antibodies on that B lymphocyte which are functioning as receptors. This binding of the proteinaceous substance

which mimics the antigen should stimulate the lymphocyte to divide.

The proteinaceous substances which mimic the growth-inducing molecule of interest are believed to be useful as drugs, vaccines, diagnostics or similar purposes.

It is also within the scope of the invention to select novel genes which produce the proteinaceous substances which mimic the growth-inducing molecule of interest. After a proteinaceous substance has been found 10 which mimics the growth-inducing molecule of interest, the expression vector which carries the genes for the proteinaceous substance is removed from the cells which produce the proteinaceous substance. Then the expression vector is analyzed by methods known in the art to determine 15 the sequence of DNA bases which codes for the proteinaceous substance. Once the base sequence of the gene coding for the proteinaceous substance is known, the base sequence and, correspondingly, the proteinaceous substance can be altered by methods known in the art in order to improve the 20 ability of the proteinaceous substance to mimic the growth-inducing molecule of interest or otherwise to improve the practice of the embodiments of this invention. In the first case, the altered gene is inserted into an expression vector which is then inserted into a cell which 25 lacks a growth-inducing molecule necessary for cell growth and division. The selection procedure which has been previously described for selecting a proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule is then followed.

I claim

- 1. A process for selecting a proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule comprising the steps of:
- a. providing cells which require a growthinducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division and
 which have been transformed by recombinant DNA technique to
 secrete proteinaceous substances not normally secreted by
 said cells;
- b. supplying said cells with growth medium deficient in said growth inducing molecule;
 - growing said cells in said medium;
 - d. collecting a subset of said cells which grow and divide; and
- e. isolating said proteinaceous substance from said subset of said cells.
 - 2. The process of claim 1 wherein said proteinaceous substance is the translation product of synthetic genes.
- 20 3. The process of claim 1 wherein said proteinaceous substance is a peptide.
 - 4. The process of claim 1 wherein said proteinaceous substance is a protein.
- 5. The process of claim 1 wherein said growth-25 inducing molecule is epidermal growth factor.
 - 6. The process of claim 1 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is dexamethasone.

- 7. The process of claim 1 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is an antigen.
- 8. The process of claim 1 wherein said cells are a human diploid fibroblast.
- 5 9. The process of claim 8 wherein said human diploid fibroblast is WI-38.
 - 10. The process of claim 1 wherein said cells are immune system cells.
- 11. The process of claim 10 wherein said immune10 system cells are B lymphocytes.
- proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule, said proteinaceous substance being the translation product of synthetic genes introduced into said cells by a recombinant DNA technique, comprising the steps of:
- a. providing cells which require a growthinducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division and
 which cells have been transformed by recombinant DNA
 technique to produce proteinaceous substances not normally
 - b. supplying said cells with a growth medium deficient in said growth-inducing molecule;

secreted by said cells;

- c. growing said cells in said medium; and
- d. isolating a subset of said cells which grow and divide.

- 13. The process of claim 12 wherein said proteinaceous substance is the translation product of synthetic genes.
- 14. The method of claim 12 wherein said 5 proteinaceous substance is a peptide.
 - 15. The method of claim 12 wherein said proteinaceous substance is a protein.
 - 16. The process of claim 12 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is epidermal growth factor.
- 17. The process of claim 12 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is dexamethasone.
 - 18. The process of claim 12 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is an antigen.
- 19. The process of claim 12 wherein said cells 15 are a human diploid fibroblast.
 - 20. The process of claim 19 wherein said human diploid fibroblast is WI-38.
 - 21. The process of claim 12 wherein said cells are immune system cells.
- 22. The process of claim 21 wherein said immune system cells are B lymphocytes.
 - 23. A process for selecting synthetic genes which code for a proteinaceous substance which mimics a growth-inducing molecule comprising the following steps:
- 25 (a). providing expression vectors which contain synthetic genes which code for a proteinaceous substance;
 - (b). transforming cells which require a growth-inducing molecule to stimulate cell growth and division to

include said expression vector thereby causing said cells to produce a proteinaceous substance which is the translation product of said synthetic genes in said expression vector;

- 5 (c). supplying said transformed cells with growth medium deficient in said growth-inducing molecule;
 - (d). growing said transformed cells in said growth medium;
- (d). isolating a subset of said cells which grow10 and divide;
 - (e). removing said expression vector from said subset of said cells which grow and divide; and
 - (f). analyzing said synthetic genes in said expression vector.
- 15 24. The process of claim 23 wherein said proteinaceous substance is a peptide.
 - 25. The process of claim 23 wherein said proteinaceous substance is a protein.
- 26. The process of claim 23 wherein said growth-20 inducing molecule is epidermal growth factor.
 - 27. The process of claim 23 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is dexamethasone.
 - 28. The process of claim 23 wherein said growth-inducing molecule is an antigen.
- 25 29. The process of claim 23 wherein said cells are a human diploid fibroblast.
 - 30. The process of claim 29 wherein said human diploid fibroblast is WI-38.

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- 31. The process of claim 23 wherein said cells are immune system cells.
- 32. The process of claim 31 wherein said immune system cells are B lymphocytes.

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I. CLASSIFICATIO	N OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classific	ation symbols apply, indicate all) 6		
IPC(4):	onal Patent Classification (IPC) or to both Nation C12P 21/00; C12N 1/2 35/68, 172.3, 240.26,	20, 5/02, 15/00		
II. FIELDS SEARCH	Minimum Documenta	tion Searched 7		
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Chemical Abstracts Data Base (CAS) 1967-1989; Biologica ostracts Data Base (BIOSIS) 1967-1989. Keywords: Recombinant ector, Plasmid, Epidermal Growth Factor (EGF).				
III. DOCUMENTS	CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT 9	orgate of the relevant passages 12	Relevant to Claim No. 13	
Category * Citat	tion of Document, 11 with indication, where appro	printe, of the feloralit passages		
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1	NFORMATION CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET	
	BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS, Volume 84, No. 5, issued 1 September 1987 (OVE ET AL) "Isolation of an autocrine growth factor from hepatoma HTC-SR cells". See page 514, column 2, the Abstract No. 47733, J. Cell. Physiol. 1987 131(2):165-174.	1-32
1	SCIENCE Volume 235, issued 16 January 1987 (STERN ET AL) "Construction of a novel oncogene based on synthetic sequences encoding epidermal growth factor". See entire document.	1-32
. OBSER	VATIONS WHERE CERTAIN CLAIMS WERE FOUND UNSEARCHABLE	
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. Claim nu	nal search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2) (a)	for the following reasons:
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